

"In 2002, at 15 years old, Canadian-born Omar Khadr, was captured on the field of battle in Afghanistan. His alleged war crimes include murder, for throwing the grenade that killed Army Sergeant First Class Christopher Speer. If convicted, Khadr faces life in prison.

But, for killing the special forces medic from Albuquerque, Omar Khadr's fate may turn out to be far different.

Before a war crimes tribunal can reconvene to address his case, the lawyers involved in the case are reported to be close to a plea agreement allowing Khadr to serve only 10 years in prison, and possibly as few as eight.

Khadr is now 24 years old. He denies taking part in the attack, and he says he should be sent home to rehabilitate after his eight-year detention at Guantanamo Bay. His attorneys argue that there are mitigating factors to reduce the possible life sentence to as little as eight years, but one of the soldiers wounded by Khadr still views the terrorist as a threat and would like him to serve a minimum of 20 years.

If this doesn't sit well with you, it doesn't sit well with the soldiers wounded in their capture of Khadr - and it doesn't sit well with me, either. In fact, I've worked for legislative language that restricts the use of federal funds to bring terror suspects from Guantanamo to the United States so they can access a federal court prior to having their case heard by a military tribunal. And Americans should be appalled by the Obama Administration's extension of a weak plea bargain to the killer we captured on the battlefield.

Plea agreements have their place in our system of justice, but the one being talked about for Khadr embodies the Obama Administration's less-than-realistic approach to punishing enemy combatants. Unfortunately, this is not the first time the Administration has taken the wrong path to addressing the punishment of terrorists who threaten American lives.

The Christmas Day bomber, Umar Abdulmutallab, who attempted to explode a passenger aircraft landing in Detroit on Christmas Day in 2009, was read Miranda rights by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. By allowing the FBI to do so, Abdulmutallab was treated as a criminal as opposed to a terrorist, and that action allowed him to remain silent and not speak to U.S. officials. This action would have been extremely detrimental to the interrogation of Abdulmutallab, but for his father who convinced him to talk to U.S. officials to share his knowledge of the terrorist cell from which he operated.

There can be no mistaking the danger posed to Americans by the likes of Khadr and Abdulmutallab. They are killers, plain and simple, whether on the battlefield, where their targets are U.S. troops, or in civilian spaces where their targets are hundreds, even thousands, of innocent American men, women and children. They must never be allowed to strike us twice, their victims should get the justice they deserve, and the American public must have the security of a code of justice ready and willing to prosecute terrorists and enemy combatants to the fullest extent of the law."

